

needs among educators: eighty-two percent are male, over one-third ethnic minorities, and a majority bring an expertise in science and math to the classroom. In an increasingly globalized economy, these valuable characteristics provide a vital resource for schools across the country.

However, this success is now in jeopardy due to a drafting error in the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act which has inadvertently restricted the number of schools at which participants may fulfill their service. The applicable definition for "high-need local education agencies" for Troops to Teachers was inadvertently changed as it was included in the section of the legislation regarding other alternative programs that had a different definition. This stricter definition requires a higher threshold for "high-need," requiring the school to have either 10,000 students or 20 percent of students from families below the poverty level. However, the original Title I definition of high-need was also retained in the law in the section specifically detailing the Troops program. Essentially, Congress inadvertently created two conflicting definitions of "high-need" with regard to this program.

Early on, the Department of Education and the Troops to Teachers program recognized this unintended change in law and worked together to address it. From 2003–2005, while discussions were being held on how to reconcile this discrepancy, the program continued to operate under the original and intended definition. However, after the completion of a negotiated rulemaking process in September 2005, the Department issued a regulation stating that the new, stricter definition was not an error but congressional intent. As one of the leading supporters of this program during the drafting of No Child Left Behind, I can assure my colleagues that this clearly was not the intent of the supporters of the program.

Madam Speaker, the unfortunate result of this, aside from limiting the number of schools at which veterans may teach and honor their obligation of three-years service, is that it has disproportionately impacted western and rural states. In my home state of Wisconsin, the number of eligible school districts has been reduced from approximately 420 to 13. Not surprisingly, participation in the program has fallen significantly since the implementation of the new definition. This decision, although understandable given the conflicting definitions contained in the law, is a disservice both to veterans wishing to continue their service to our nation as educators as well as children who stand to benefit from their unique expertise.

The bottom line is that we are losing out on great teachers because they cannot accept the certification stipend due to a lack of schools meeting the higher needs threshold in their communities. The more we restrict opportunities for participation, the fewer teachers we will be able to bring into public education, and the fewer teachers we will eventually be able to attract to the schools with the greatest need. Further, given the nation's need for more math and science teachers, we should be removing, not creating, restrictions that prevent qualified teachers in these areas from teaching in our nation's classrooms.

Madam Speaker, with Troops to Teachers, the Department already has an established program that is well-funded and successful. Rather than restricting it, we should be maximizing this program's potential. This legislation

would correct this error and restore the original intent of the Troops to Teachers program. Our bill would ensure that veterans participating in the Troops to Teachers program may receive a \$5,000 stipend for teaching for three years in any school that is in a district receiving grants under part A of Title I. This legislation would result in a 49% increase in the number of eligible schools for the program. This would mean that in my home state of Wisconsin, 94 percent of the schools in the state would once again be eligible for the program.

The legislation would retain the current criteria for troops to receive an additional bonus of \$5,000 for teaching in a high need school, defined as in a school district that has at least 10% or greater who come from families living below the poverty level and a school where at least 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch or have a "high percentage" of students with disabilities.

I urge my colleagues to join me and Congresswoman MATSUI in supporting this successful program and restoring the opportunity to "serve again" to our nation's veterans.

#### A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHALFONT METHODIST CHURCH

#### HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2009*

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, the Chalfont Methodist Church was founded in 1808 and is celebrating its 200th anniversary in Washington Township, Ohio; and

Whereas, the congregation was started by Mordecai Chalfant, a member of the society in Methodism in 1808 but did not have a church until 1811, and

Whereas, in June of 1970, when the East Ohio Conference of the Methodist Church decided to close the parish due to dwindling membership, the building was turned over to another congregation and scheduled to be demolished, the community came together to form the Chalfant Society, raising money to purchase the building and have it named to the National Register of Historic Buildings; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that along with the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I commend the Chalfont Methodist Church for two centuries of dedication and service to the Washington township community and their determination to save the church building and continue the good works of the parish.

#### H.R. 1293, DISABLED VETERANS HOME IMPROVEMENT AND STRUCTURAL ALTERATION GRANT INCREASE ACT OF 2009

#### HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2009*

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a bill to provide an increase in the amount payable to disabled veterans under

the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Home Improvement and Structural Alteration Program.

Known as the HISA program, this important VA benefit provides grants to seriously disabled veterans who require home adaptations to provide access to in-home medical care.

Typically, HISA grants are used for such things as widening doors; putting in handrails or special lighting; making kitchens, bathrooms, windows, or electrical outlets and switches more accessible; building ramps or improving entrance paths and driveways.

The benefit is paid from the medical care appropriation and is available to both veterans with service-connected and non-service connected disabilities. A service-connected veteran can receive a HISA grant in addition to other home adaptations grants available through the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Congress first authorized VA to establish the HISA program as part of outpatient care for home health services in 1973. We have been engaged in the Global War on Terror for nearly eight years and are seeing an increasing number of servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan utilizing VA health care. It is especially important that this program remains relevant and can meet the needs of our newest generation of veterans.

The current maximum amount of a HISA grant is \$4,100 for service-connected veterans and \$1,200 for non-service connected veterans. This amount was established by Congress in 1992 and has not been raised in seventeen years.

My bill would increase the maximum amount of the grants to \$6,800 for service-connected veterans and \$2,000 for non-service connected veterans. This recommended increase reflects a three percent increase for each year since 1992. It accounts for inflation and the increased cost of home modifications.

I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this legislation. It would have a direct and immediate impact on improving health care and the quality of life for our disabled veterans.

#### SOLID WASTE GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION ACT

#### HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2009*

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the "Solid Waste Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act," legislation that will reduce our nation's contribution to global warming by addressing the methane gas that escapes from municipal solid waste landfills.

Hardly a week goes by without reports of new evidence that the world climate is changing because of human activities that are putting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Scientists predict that as the earth warms, droughts and flooding will become more severe, threatening the world's food supply. Warmer ocean waters are producing expanding oxygen-depleted zones that are unable to support sea life. Higher temperatures are shrinking the Arctic ice cap, threatening coastal communities with rising sea levels and destroying the habitat that polar bears depend